GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:286
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2000
MEETING OF COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE IN WTO
AJAY CHAKRABORTY

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(

(a) whether the Committee on Agriculture in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) met in the middle of November this year to consider the proposals of different countries; (

(b) if so, the details in this regard; (

(c) whether India has also submitted its proposal; and (

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) to (d) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.286 FOR DECEMBER,2000 REGARDING MEETING OF COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE IN WTO.

(a)& (b) : The Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organisation has met in a Special Session from 15th -17thNovember 2000 and has discussed the proposals submitted by the member countries on agricultural negotiations.

During the Special Session, proposals on `Non-trade Concerns` by 24 member countries including European Communities, Japan, Switzerland, Republic of Korea, Norway and some other developing countries, and least developed countries, and on `Export Subsidies, Food Security or Food Dependency` by Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia and Costa Rica, were discussed. India in its intervention, interalia, has suitably highlighted the fact that though sufficient flexibility is required by large agrarian developing economies to address their food and livelihood security concerns, it is not supportive of the attempts of certain developed countries to maintain their trade distorting subsidies under the garb of `multifunctionality`. India has supported the proposal on `Export Subsidies, Food Security and Food Dependency` as was put forward by Argentina and others. Philippines on behalf of Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) introduced a paper on `Special and Differential Provisions` which was supported by India in its intervention. Besides these, 2 other proposals on market access and domestic support were introduced by transition economies viz. Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Estonia. There was also a brief discussion on the United States` proposal for tariff rate quota reform.

(c) & (d) : India had earlier co-sponsored a paper on `Market Access` along with 11 other developing countries during the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture in the month of September 2000.In this paper trade distortions prevalent in international markets and the consequent hindrance to the exports from the developing countries have been highlighted and it has been proposed that developed countries should effect substantial reductions in their tariffs on a weighted average basis, eliminate tariff peaks and tariff escalations. It has also been demanded that the administration of tariff rate quotas (TRQs) should be made transparent and equitable for all trading partners, and there should be regular enhancement of TRQs so as to improve market access for all developing countries. All forms of trade distorting export subsidies must be eliminated by developed countries and domestic support provided by developed countries should be substantially reduced, dumping must be prohibited and the provisions of the SPS Agreement which inhibit the ability of developing countries to export agricultural products should be suitably addressed.